AN ANALYIS OF THE CONCEPT OF ONENESS FROM A SUFI PERSPECTIVE AS PRESENTED BY MUHAMMAD NAFIS AL-BANJARI IN HIS TREATISE - AL-DURR AL-NAFIS

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ABSTRACT:
The teachings of Tasawuf have flourished in the Malay world due to the efforts from Malay scholars who studied in Makkah. Muhammad Nafis al-Banjari is one of them. He wrote his treatise on tawhid in a small epistle known as al-durr al-nafis fi bayan wahid al-af^c^al- wa al-asma' wa al-sifat wa al-dhat al-taqdis . His teaching of tawhid written in Malay Jawi script is embroidered with Sufi teachings. However, his teachings raise issues of controversial and misunderstood nature. One of the contentious issues his epistle is blamed for is regarding the promotion of pantheism having connotation of unity of being (wahdah al-wujud). The objective of this study is to reveal the misconception of tawhid embroidered in the Sufi teachings and the importance of understanding the correct concept of tawhid from the original sources of Islam. This paper employs a detailed historical and textual study. Despite various controversies, al-Banjari epistle is considered to be a valuable work from a historical point of view. His highly succinct explanation requires additional reference and commentaries for readers to acquire appropriate understanding. It is according considered necessary to study his epistle under the proper guidance from the learned shuyookh to conceive it correctly.

KEYWORDS: Al-Banjāri, Al-durr al-nafīs, Tawḥīd, Sufi order

His Life:

Little is known about al-Banjārī's life except what he mentioned in his book, *al-durr al-nafīs fī bayān wāḥid al-afᶜāl- wa al-asmā' wa al-ṣifāt wa al-dhāt al-taqdīs* (the valuable pearl in explaining the unity of actions, names, qualities and transcendental divine essence). Al-Banjārī stated at the end of his book that his real name is Muhammad Nafīs b. Idrīs b. al-

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Ḥusayn al-Banjārī. He was born around 1148H/1735M in Martapura, South Kalimantan, and belonged to the Banjār royal family. Based on his birth date, he is believed to be a contemporary to Muḥammad Arshād al-Banjārī (1122-1227H / 1710-1812M) and ᶜAbd al-Ṣamad al-Falimbānī (1118-1203H / 1704-1789M). He lived during three of Banjar's Sultanates such as Sulṭān Taḥlīlullah XIV(1707-1745M), Sulṭān Tamjīdullah XV (1745-1778M) and Sulṭān Taḥmīdullah XVI (1778-1808M).[1]

Around 1210H/1795M al-Banjārī returned to his hometown in South Kalimantan for an Islamic mission. He went to strategic places and villages, such as Bali, Sumabawa, and Kelua, to preach Islam. Al-Banjārī passed away in his own land but the exact date and place of death are uncertain. There are various views about his place of death. According to one report, he died in Sigam or Pulau Laut. Another view is that he died in Kusan, Kotabaru or Kelua or in Tungkaran Pleihari, which are located in South Kalimantan.[2]

His Education:

It is believed that al-Banjari received his early education in his homeland South Kalimantan and then pursued his religious study extensively in Makkah and Madinah. However, no historical record supports this statement. Al-Banjari studied scince of theology (*ᶜilm al-kalām)* of the al-Ashᶜari's school, science of Islamic law (*ᶜilm al-fiqh)* from al-Shafiᶜi's School, and Sufism (*al-taṣawwuf)* from al-Junayd's school. Al-Banjari followed al-Junayd's school because this school adheres to the doctrine of sobriety (*saḥw*) rather than intoxication (*sakr*) or divinely ecstatic utterance (*shaṭaḥāt*). He then emphasized practicality to embark spiritually on several Sufi orders. The Sufi order or *ṭarīqah ṣūfiyyah* is derived from Arabic term meaning 'road', 'way', 'path'. It comes finally to mean a common life (*muᶜāshara*) founded on a series of special rules in addition to the ordinary observance of Islam, to become an adept (*faqīr*), the novice (*murīd*) receives initiation (*bayᶜah, talqīn*) before a hierarchy of witnesses (*shaykh*).[3]

He primarily practiced the recognized orders such as al-Qādiriyyah established by Shaykh ᶜAbd al-Qādir al-Jilānī (471-561H/1078-1166M), al-Shaṭṭariyyah established by Shah ᶜAbd Allah al-Shattarī (d.890H/1485M), al-Naqshabandiyyah founded by Shaykh Muhammad b. Muhammad Baha' al-Dīn (718-791H/1318-1389M), al-Khalwatiyyah founded by Shaykh Sidi 'Abu ᶜAbd Allah Siraj al-Din ᶜUmar al-Ahjī or ᶜUmar al-Khalwatī (d.800H/1397M) and al-

Sammāniyyah founded by Shaykh Muhammad b. cAbd al-Karim al-Madani al-Shafci al-Samman al-Qadiri al-Sufi (1130-1189H /1718-1776M).[4] Out of all disciplines, al-Banjari was known as an expert in science of theology (c*ilm al-kalām)* and science of Sufism (*al-taṣawwuf)*. Since he follows these schools of thought and Sufi orders he is still within the structure of *ahl al-sunnah wa al-jamāʿah.*

Although he affiliated into many Sufi orders*,* he maintained and followed the original teachings of the orders as taught by his masters. No sources have been found which make any claim that he intended to form a new order. Since he successfully embarked onto many Sufi orders and had very deep knowledge in Sufism, he was called as *mawlānā al-callāmah al-fahhāmah al-murshid 'ilā ṭarīq al-salāmah* (our master of the outstanding knowledgeable spiritual teacher to a safety path) an appellation indicating his expertise and highly spiritual experiential achievement and knowledge in Sufism discipline by those who came after him[5].

Scholars Exerting Influence in al-Banjārī's thought:

Al-Banjārī studied under several outstanding scholars whom he documented in *al-durr al-nafīs* as *shaykhunā* (our master). Among the dominant masters that exerted impacts on al-Banjari's thought are; Shaykh cAbd Allāh b. Ḥijāzī b. Ibrahīm al-Sharqawī al-Azharī (1150-1227H /1737-1812M). He was a *Faqīh* (a learned) who graduated from al-'Azhar University. Shaykh Muḥammad b. cAbd al-Karīm al-Madanī al-Shāficī al-Shahīr bi al-Sammān al-Qādirī al-Ṣūfī (1130-1189H /1718-1776M) and Shaykh Ṣiddīq b. cUmar Khān al-Madanī.

Beside them, al-Banjārī also learned from Shaykh cAbd Allāh b. Ibrahīm al-Mīrghanī. He was believed to be the same person as cAbd Allāh b. Ibrahīm b. Ḥasan b. Muḥammad Amīn b. cAlī al-Mīrghanī, Abū al-Siyādah, cAfīf al-Dīn al-Maḥjūb (d.1193H/1779M). He who was born in Makkah and died in al-Ṭā'if and was an outstanding *faqīh* from the School of al-Ḥanafī. He is called as *al-maḥjūb* (veiled) due to his practice of c*uzlah*'(self-isolation) in his house for 30 years. Shaykh cAbd al-Raḥmān b. cAbd al-cAzīz al-Maqhribī al-cUmarī was probably known as cAbd al-Raḥmān b. cAbd al-cAzīz al-Maqhribī al-Tādilī al-Madanī al-Mālikī āl-Sammān Ṭarīqatan (d.1200H / 1786M).

Shaykh Muḥammad b. Aḥmad al-Jawharī., his full name was Muhammad b. Aḥmad b. Ḥasan b. cAbd al-Karīm al-Khālidī, 'Abū al-Hādī al-Shahīr bi ibn al-Jawharī aw al-Jawharī al-Ṣaghīr (1151H-1215H /1738-1801M). He was an Egyptian scholar and a *faqīh* (a learned) in the

School of al-Shāfiᶜī. Shaykh Yūsuf Abū Dharrah al-Miṣrī was a scholar, whom al-Banjārī attended in his scholarly lectures in Masjid al-Ḥarām. Shaykh al-Malawī, his full name was Aḥmad b. ᶜAbd al-Fattah b. Yūsuf b. ᶜUmar al-Majīrī al-Malawī, Shihāb al-Dīn Abū ᶜAbbas al-Qāhirī al-Azharī al-Baqhdādī al-Shāfiᶜī (1088H-1171H), and Shaykh al-Suhaymi who was also known as Aḥmad b. Muḥammad Muwaffiq al-Dīn ᶜAlī al-Suhaymī al-Husaynī al-Miṣri al-Shāfiᶜī (d.1178H).

Al-Falimbānī stated that Shaykh Ṣiddīq b. ᶜUmar Khān al-Madanī and Shaykh ᶜAbd al-Raḥmān b. ᶜAbd al-ᶜAzīz al-Maqribī, were both the disciples of Shaykh Muḥammad b. ᶜAbd al-Karīm al-Madanī al-Shāfiᶜi al-Shahīr bi al-Sammān al-Qādirī al-Ṣūfī in Madinah.[6] (Abdul Samad n.d) . It can be assumed that all these scholars, Muhammad Nafīs, Muḥammad Arshād and ᶜAbd al-Ṣamad al-Falimbānī, studied under the same teacher, that is, Shaykh Muḥammad b. ᶜAbd al-Karīm al-Madanī al-Shāfiᶜi, but at different times.

Under the principal traditional teaching of Sufism, it is impermissible for one to embark into many Sufi orders. In the case of al-Banjārī, it is seen that his basic Sufi order is al-qādiriyyah as he mentioned clearly in his book that it is his Sufi order. He most probably learned this order with Shaykh Muḥammad b. ᶜAbd al-Karīm al- Madanī al-Sammān as evidenced from the title "al-qādirī" attributed to him, which indicates that he also belonged to al-qādiriyyah order, besides al-sammāniyyah order. The other Sufi orders become his supplementary spiritual learning for the purpose of the *al-tabarruk* (divine blessing and benediction). However, al-sammāniyyah order exerted strong impact on his Sufi discourse due to his strong reliance on the thought of and spiritual connection to Shaykh Muḥammad b. ᶜAbd al-Karīm al-Madanī al-Sammān and Shaykh Ṣiddīq b. ᶜUmar Khān al-Madanī.

From a clear identification found in al-Banjārī's teachers, it can be said that most his teachers are Theologians, Sufis and Jurists from Makkah and Egypt. It can be assumed that al-Banjārī probably traveled to Egypt and learned with some Egyptian scholars or they might have come to Makkah and taught him in masjid al-ḥarām but no empirical facts can support this.

His Works:

As far as it can be ascertained, al-Banjārī wrote several works in Malay-Jawi script during his life. One of them was *al-Durr al-Nafīs fi Bayān Wāhidah al- Afᶜāl- wa al 'Asmā' wa al-Ṣifāt wa Dhāt Dhāt al-Taqdīs* which he completed writing on the Wednesday night after ᶜIshā', 27

Muḥarram 1200H / 1785M. He also wrote other small treatises including *majmūᶜ al-asrār* (*collection of the secrets*), *penjelasan huruf–huruf abjad dalam al-qur'ān* (*elucidation on the alphabets in al-qur'ān), ilmu haqīqat yang sebenar benar (science of the divine reality in the real sense), masalah orang yang di jadikan imam (problem on person becoming the leader in praying*).[7]

Among all treatises, the most popular epistle is *al-Durr al-Nafīs*. It has been taught in Makkah and many Asian countries including Malaysia and Indonesia. This is proven from manuscripts copied by particular people's handwriting such as Maḥmūd b. Muḥammad Yūsuf Terengganu that he copied it on Tuesday night between the Maghrib and ᶜIshā' period at 29 Safar 1255H / 14 May 1839M. Wan Kenci B. Tuan Ḥaji ᶜAbd al-Ghafūr also finished copying at al-Jamād al-Awwal 11306H / 1888M.[8]

The major reason why al-Banjārī wrote *al-durr al-nafīs* is a response to help his fellow folk who did not know Arabic language to learn *tawḥīd* from the Sufi perspective.[9] His work in translating and transforming the significant thoughts from various Arabic Sufi literatures into Malay–Jawi scripts denotes his mastery and proficiency in both Arabic and Malay languages, and his translation skill. He thus had a commendable capability to understand the relevant important facts from Arabic texts and translate them into a comprehensible Malay language in accordance with the level of understanding of the Malay society at that time.

Al-durr al-nafīs is a widely accepted book. It was reprinted many times in Makkah, Egypt, Malaysia and Indonesia. A number of scholars who worked to verify and edit the contents of *al-durr al-nafīs* as a sound teaching of *tawḥīd* before it was printed are: Shaykh 'Aḥmad b. Muḥammad Zayn al-Faṭānī (d. 1903 AD), Shaykh Dā'ūd b. Ismāᶜil Dā'ūd al-Faṭānī, Shaykh 'Idrīs b. Ḥusayn al-Kelantani, Shaykh ᶜAbd al-Raḥman Gudang al-Fatani, Shaykh ᶜAbd Allah b. Ibrāḥim al-Qāḍī Kedah, Shaykh 'Idrīs al-Marbāwī (d 1989M) and Shaykh Ilyāṣ Yaᶜqūb al-Azharī.[10] These figures are the recognizable Malay Scholars who are well-experienced in writing and teaching various sciences of Islamic religious knowledge in the Malay World.

Literature Used by al-Banjārī in *al-Durr al-Nafīs:*

In *al-durr al-nafīs,* al-Banjārī refers to authentic Arabic literature in order to support his explanation. Among the reliable literature are: *al-risālah al-qushayriyyah* by Abd al-Qāsim al-Qushayrī (376-465H/986-1072M), *iḥyā' ᶜulūm al-dīn* and *minhāj al-ᶜābidīn* by Ḥujjah al-Islām Abū Ḥāmid al-

Ghazzālī al-Ṭūsī Shaykh Muḥammad b. Muḥammad (450-505H/1058 1111M), *futūḥāt al-makkiyyah* and *fuṣūṣ* by al shaykh al-Akbar Muḥy al-Dīn Ibn ᶜArabī (560-638H / 1165-1240M), *al-jawāhir wa al-durr* and *al-yawāqīt wa al-jawāhir fī bayān ᶜaqāᶜid al-akābir* by Shaykh Abd al-Wahhāb al-Shaᶜrānī (898-973H/1493-1575M), *al-ḥikam* by Tāj al-Dīn Ibn ᶜAṭā'illāh al-Iskandarī.(d.709H/1309M), *sharḥ al-ḥadīth al-arbaᶜīn li al-nawāwī* by Shihāb al-Dīn Ibn Ḥajar al-ᶜAsqasṭalānī (773-852H / 1372-1449M), *qhayth al-mawāhib al-ᶜāliyah bi sharḥ al-ḥikam al-ᶜaṭā'iyyah* by Ibn ᶜUbbād al-Randī, (733-792H/1333-1390M), *Sharḥ al-Ḥikam* by, Shihāb al-Dīn al-Ramlī (773-844H/1371-1440M), *dalā'il al-khayrāt* by Shaykh Muḥammad b. Sulaymān al-Jazūlī al-Simlālī al-Shādhilī (807-870H / 1404-1465M).[11]

Additional scholarly treatises are*: sharḥ fuṣūṣ al-ḥikam* by Shaykh ᶜAbd al-Ghanī al-Nābulusī (1050-1143H /1641-1731M), *mulkhiṣ mukhtaṣar tuḥfah al-mursalah* by Shaykh ᶜAbd Allāh b. Ibrāhīm al-Mīrghanī, *sharḥ qaṣīdah ᶜayniyyah* by Shaykh Ṣiddīq b. ᶜUmar Khān, *sharḥ wird al- saḥar* by Shaykh ᶜAbd Allah b. Ḥijāzī b. Ibrāhīm al-Miṣrī, *al-minḥah al muhamadiyyah, ᶜunwān al jalwah fi sha'n al-khulwah* and *ighāsah al-lahfān wa mu'ānasah al-wilhān* by Shaykh Muḥammad b. ᶜAbd al- Karīm al-Sammān al-Madanī (1130-1189H/1718-1776M). From these primary sources, it is understood that al-Banjārī's exposition of *al tawḥīd* from the Sufi perspective is in line with the mainstream thinking of the *ahl al-sunnah wa jamāᶜah* school.

Responses From The Contemporary Scholars:

At the beginning of the 20th Century, a number of scholars gave their responses to the teaching of *tawḥīd* in *al-durr al-nafīs* . Some of them criticize it and some expressed a positive reaction. Wan Muhammad Shaghir reports that al-Sayyid ᶜAlwī Ṭāhir al-Ḥaddād, a state Mufti of the Government of Johor, expressed his disapproval of the teaching of *tawḥīd* by al-Banjārī. The Mufti believed that the concept of *tawḥīd wujūdīyya* in al-Banjārī's book clearly conflicts to Islamic basic principles and mixes with Hinduism. Abdul Fatah Harūn also criticizes al-Banjārī in his books *ahli sunnah dan wujudiyah –batiniah* (*mengenai ajaran salah*)(*ahl al sunnah and wujudiyyah-batiniyyah* pertaining to its deviant teachings. He is of the opinion that al Banjārī's teaching of *tawḥīd wujūdīy* is not in line with *ahl Sunnah wa al-Jamāᶜah* mainstream thought and was influenced by Greek philosophy, Hinduism and Shiᶜism. Muhammad Hanif Hassan in his paper, *sejarah ringkas perkembangan ajaran sesat di singapore* (*brief history of the development of deviant teaching in Singapore*) remarks that

al-Banjāri's teaching of *tawḥīd* leans towards pantheism and the belief that God is a part of the world.[12]

Although al-Banjārī's teaching was severely criticized by many, his teaching also exerted a strong impact on many scholars such as cAbd al-Raḥman Ṣiddiq Safat Tamabanhan Indragiri, a grandson of Shaykh Muḥammad 'Arshād al-Banjārī. He wrote *risālah camal macrifah (treatise for gnostic practice*) in 1332H with a short quotation from the content of *al-durr al-nafīs*. Furthermore, Shaykh Muḥammad Ṣālih b. cAbd Allah al-Minangkabaw also wrote *kashf al-asrār (revealing the secrets)* in 1344H with reference to *al-durr al-nafīs*. K.H Haderanie romanized *al-Durr al-Nafīs* into the Indonesian language with some commentary entitled *ilmu ketuhanan permata yang indah (al-durr al-nafīs beserta soal jawab)* (*science of god the precious jewel with answer and question*). Jahid Sidek also quoted the ideas of al-Banjārī in his book *shaykh dalam cilm tarīqah* (*shaykh in tarīqah*).[13] It can be said that the difference in acceptance of al-Banjārī's teachings of *tawḥīd* among the scholars can be a result of the the methods of interpretation they applied to receive them.

The Concept of *Tawḥīd* According to Al-Banjārī:

In Ashcarī's school, the discussion method of unveiling and its relation to *tawḥīd wujūdī* is not vividly mentioned and discussed by the earlier theologians, but both concepts had been deliberated by the late theologians. Theologians in Ashcarī School had their own perception toward *tawḥīd wujūdī*. Some of them like Sacad al-Din Mascūd al-Taftāzānī (d.1390M) criticized severely *tawḥīd al-wujūdī* through his theological methodology. He found out that the doctrine of *tawḥīd wujūdī* leans to pantheistic connotation and abrogating the *sharīah* teaching. His view is based on his critical evaluation of the content in *fuṣuṣ al-ḥikam* by Ibn cArabī, cAlī bin Muhammad (d.1240M). However the other theologian such as cAbd al-Ghanī al-Nābulusī (d.1731M) defended *tawḥīd al-wujūdī* as a true representation of the facts based on the relevant Sufi perspective. He harmonized between the theologian and Sufi methodology within the blueprint of *sharīah* in a way that is not perceived by some a group of scholars to be against the theological principle and *sharīah* practice. He wrote some books and commentary elucidating the true meaning of *tawḥīd wujūdī* and unveiling method such as *īḍah al-maqsūd fī bayān waḥdah al-wujūd* (clarifying what is meant by the unity of being) and his *sharḥ fuṣuṣ al-ḥikam* (commentary of bezels of wisdom).[14]

As an adherent of Ashcarī's school embroidered with Sufi teaching, al-Banjari is seen as expressing precise definition of *tawḥīd* in *al-durr al-*

nafīs in accordance with relevant sufi views. Al-Banjārī's exposition the concept of *tawḥīd* from the Sūfi's perspective is more dominant than theological element and accordingly there is more emphases on the unveiling (*kashf*) methodology. This methodology can be considered as a doctrine of *tawḥīd* for unveiling people (*ahl al-mukāshifīn*). *Tawḥīd* literally means making one or asserting oneness. Al-Banjārī views it as believing wholeheartedly by direct vision and spiritual tasting in the oneness (*waḥdaniyyah, tawaḥḥud*) of Allah in all aspects of actions, names, attributes and essence. The ultimate essence of al-Banjārī's meaning of *tawḥīd* is the belief that there is no real being but Allah or there is no reality but the reality of Allah without any pantheistic meaning and strong practicing the *sharīʿah* teaching internally as well externally.

In other words, this doctrine firmly asserts that Allah is the Absolute Real One Being and all other beings are metaphorical and nonexistence being without disregarding the *sharīʿah* principles. Thus, al-Banjārī's teaching is in line with the doctrine of *tawḥīd wujūdī* or *waḥdah al-wujūd* even though he never employs clearly this terminology in his writing. *Waḥdah al-wujūd* is the unity of being, a doctrine indicates that there is only Oneself which is manifested in multiplicity. Allah is the One in His essence, His qualities and His actions. There is only One Entity in existence and multiplicity appears through relation between non-essential entities.[15]

Besides al-Banjari's teaching is considered to be inclined toward the *wujudiyyah*'s doctrine, yet his teaching also can be categorized in other terminologies such as *ᶜilm al-mukāshafah* (science of unveiling), *ᶜilm al-asrār* (science of the secrets), *ḥaq al-yaqīn* (absolute certainty), and *fana' fi tawḥīd (*annihilation in the unity) - It is considered as the highest degree of *tawḥīd* that he who attains it, his belief is affirmative and unchangeable. This is because this *tawḥīd* deals with the degree of certainty and unveiling of the reality of things in one's heart. It is similar with al-Ghazzali's teaching of *tawḥīd*. It means one ceases himself in the unification of God by witnessing nothing in being but Allah alone. This level is like oil in the kernel, the ultimate truth of *tawḥīd*. It is an article of faith of the truthful people (*al-ṣiddiqūn wa al-ᶜārifūn*).[16]

People who have experienced this kind of *tawḥīd* are people of unveiling. This is proven from the story of magicians who were fearless of the death punishment imposed by Firᶜaun because they believed firmly the reality of things discovered before their eyes and heart and that it is Allah who changed Mūsā's stick to be a big snake. The clear proof from unveiling the reality of things strongly refrain them from changing their belief as evident in the al Qur'ān. Allah says: So they (the Magicians)

were defeated there and then and were returned disgraced. And the sorcerer fell down prostrate. They said: We believe in the Lord of all creatures. The Lord of Mūsa and Hārūn. Surely I (Fir^{c}aun) will cut off your hands and your feet on opposites sides than I will crucify you all. They said: Verily, we are returning to our Lord. And you take vengeance on us only because we believed in the *Ayat* (proofs, evidences, lessons, signs etc.) of our Lord when they reached us. Our Lord pour out us patience and cause us to die as Muslims.[17] And the magicians said: "We prefer you not over the clear signs that have come to us and to Him (Allah) Who created us. So decree whatever you desire to decree for you can only decree regarding this life of the world."[18]

This *tawḥīd* is also supported by the hadīth in which the Prophet asked the proof from al-Ḥārithah b. Malīk al-Anṣārī to testify to his belief. The Prophet questioned him one day: "How is your condition today, Oh al-Ḥārithah."? He replied: "I am a true believer". The Prophet asked him again: "Indeed for every single word has its own fact thus what is your testimony of your genuine faith."? He replied: "I have removed from myself looking into worldly life, so it's stone and it's gold is similar (valueless) to me, thus I was sleepless at night for worship and was thirsty in shrine day until I can watch like as my Lord's throne in front of my eyes obviously and like as I saw people in Paradise have mutual visits of each other in Paradise and like as I perceive the sound of screaming people in the fire". The Prophet said: "You are really knowable, so consistent in such condition". In another narration the Prophet said: "Who wish to see one whose Allah enshrines His Light into his soul, look forward to al-Harithah b. Malik.[19] From the account given, it can be said that al-Banjārī's doctrine of *tawḥīd* is so unique that requires a proper Sufi methodology to comprehend it.

His Methodology in *Tawḥīd:*

Al-Banjari adheres to the al-Asha^{c}ari's school in science of theology (^{c}*ilm al-kalām).* He uses the Asha^{c}ari's speculative method that is reasoning as a starting point in learning *tawḥīd* and then ends up by employing Sufi's method: method of spiritual unveiling (*kashf*) and spiritual tasting (*dhawq*) Both are as direct vision or the uncovering of anything covered that alludes to a knowledge which does not require proof as it is a direct perception of the nature of thing[20]

Al-Banjārī combines both theological and Sufi's method as the integrated means to understand *tawḥīd.* However, the Sufi' method prevails in his teaching and writing. He believes that the unveiling (*kashf*)

is a perfect way to verify the true sense of *tawhid.* It is so important to purify the heart because the heart is the basic locus of *al–tawḥīd.* Since the *kashf* phenomena can occur in the pure heart, it becomes the best mean to perceive the real meaning of *tawḥīd*. Thus, in Sufism it is important to know the characteristics of the heart because it is a basic in religion and fundamental way to reach Allah.[21] Some people claim that the only way to purify the heart is by experiencing Sufi path through exercising any Sufi order's institution.

As the method of unveiling dominates in al-Banjārī's explanation, his method is considered within *ahl al-sunnah wa al-jamāᶜah'*s methodology but most people do not realize it. His method is in line with that of ᶜAbd al-Wahhāb b. ᶜAli b. ᶜAbd al-Kāfī al-Subki, 'Abū Naṣr Tāj al-Dīn (727-771H / 1328-1370M), known as Ibn al-Subkī in his exposition in "*sharḥ ᶜaqīdah Ibn al-Ḥājib"* where he stated," that, "*Ahl al-Sunnah wa al-Jamāᶜah* unanimously agreed on one similar basic creed such as necessary (*al-wājib*), possible (*al-jāiz*) and impossible (*al-mustaḥīl*) to Allah even though they employed different methodology and principle to perceive theological issue. *Ahl al-sunnah wa al-jamāᶜah* are divided into three main group; The first is *ahl al-Ḥadīth* (the traditionalist); their fundamental concept is based on literal interpretation of al-Qur'ān and al-Ḥadīth and consensus agreement (*al-ijmāᶜ*), the second is *ahl al-nazar wa al-ᶜaql* from *al-Ashāᶜiriyyah* and *al-Māturidiyyah* group (the rationalist and demonstrationist); their basis is complementary with reason and revelation (*al-Qur'ān* and *al-Hadith)*. The third is *ahl al-wujd wa al-kashf* (people of experience and unveiling) namely the Sufi group; Their starting points commence with the method of *ahl al-naẓar and ahl al-ḥadīth* and end up with the unveiling method (*al-kashf)* and Divine inspiration (*al-ilhām)"*[22]

Since al-Banjārī integrates both methods (theological and Sufi), he is seen as continuing Abd al-Wahhāb al-Shaᶜrānī's approach in explaining the meaning of *tawḥīd.* It is seen that Al-Shaᶜrānī is the first scholar who claimed that he officially worked in harmonizing between reasoning and unveiling method in *al-ᶜaqīdah*. Both actually are not contravened but have mutual role to strengthening each other.[23] Al-Banjārī's way in explaining *tawḥīd* follows the steps of eminent Sufi scholars utilizing many terminologies, metaphors, allusions and symbols as indicators to present the meaning in *tawḥīd*. These ways are styles and trends of Sufi scholars to avoid people misinterpreting their teaching and accusing them of heresy. This tradition is also practiced by al-Ḥasan al-Baṣrī (d.110H/728M) and al-Junayd al-Baghdādī (d. 298H/910M). For instance, to avoid misinterpretation by people, al-Junayd never spoke publicly about

tawḥīd from Sufi perspective to ordinary people. However if he wanted to discuss the issue of *tawḥīd* in this manner, he will close the door and keep the key secured. [24]

Al-Banjārī's methodology in attaining *al-kashf* (unveiling) is called *mujāhadah al-kashf* (striving unveiling) because it deals with pure heart. For those who wish to realize this kind *tawḥīd*, they must follow its own particular discipline and understand its terminologies properly. If not, one is unable to perceive the highest end of the Sufis in their elaboration the meaning of *tawḥīd.* His way is clarified by Ibn ᶜAjībah, Aḥmad b. Muḥammad b. ᶜAjībah al-Hasanī (d.1224H). He stated that *mujāhadah al-kashf* (striving unveiling) compulsorily requires a *shaykh* because, in fact, the *shaykh* has spiritual escalation (*tarqiyyah*) that can help improve pupil's spiritual dimension within their meeting, a particular spiritual ceremony, and explain unseen phenomena like the Prophet sought descriptions from Waraqah b. Nawfal to know about Prophethood's matter and its signs.

In this way, the shaykh is called *shaykh al-tarqiyyah (master of* spiritual escalation*).* He also covers the functions of *shaykh al-taᶜlīm* (master of learning) and *shaykh al-tarbiyyah* (master of teaching). Ibn ᶜAjībah acknowledged the necessity of the *shaykh* in *mujāhadah al-kashf* as very completely helpful to attain objective and close to the truth. Whereas in *mujāhadah al-taqwā*, it is seen as unnecessary to require the *shaykh* for guidance and it is sufficient for one to practice by collecting data via reading books. In *mujāhadah al-istiqāmah* (striving of consistency), it is encouraged to seek a *shaykh* for instruction on what the best matter for one is but sometimes it also enough for him to read in order to attain his end objective. However, both are recommendable and more helpful to have the Sufi master to complete one's aim. The scholars who practice *mujāhadah al-kashf* are the likes of al-Ghazzālī who learned from al-Shaykh Muhammad al-Bāzighānī, ᶜAbd al- Wahhab al- Shaᶜrānī took a lesson from Shaykh ᶜAlī al- Khawwaṣ, Shaykh ᶜIzz al-Dīn b. ᶜAbd al-Salām studied under Shaykh Abū al-Hassan al-Shāzilī.[25] (Ībn Ājībāḥ 2000;al-Shaᶜrānī n.ḍ)

In conclusion, al-Banjārī'ṣ views on Sufism have a strong basis from al- Qur'ān and al-Sunnah and spiritual experiences of previous prominent Sufi Scholars. He chooses reason and the unveiling method to understanding *tawḥīd*. He never denies the function of reason in understanding the foundation of *tawḥīd.* The use of the unveiling method is the last step to verify the true meaning of *tawḥīd*. One who is able to comprehend the meaning of *tawḥīd* from a Sufi's perspective is called as *al-rāsikhūn fi al-ᶜilm* (those who firmly established in knowledge).

Methodology of His Writing:

Al-Banjārī has his own way in writing about the teaching of *tawḥīd*. Following the tradition of many scholars, he commences his preface by praising Allah and asking for the Prophet Muhammad blessings upon him as well as his families, companions, Saints and the followers of followers of the Prophetic teaching until to the Day of Judgment. This action is observed as a courtesy from al-Banjārī toward Allah and His Prophet. He regards his writing as a succinct work (*risālah mukhtaṣarah)* comprising a high-level teaching about *tawḥīd* cited from both the words of reputable Sufi's scholars as well as from authentic Sufis' texts.

As his work comprises a highly valuable teaching level of *tawḥīd*, he entitles his work as *al-durr al-nafīs* . He also mentions his objective is to help his fellowmen who cannot understand the Arabic language to learn *tawḥīd* in a Malay medium. To indicate the element of *tawḥīd* in his work, he says that he composes the content of the book by requiring Allah's assistance and His guidance.[26]

He organizes his teaching systematically: by locating introduction, the four classifications of *tawḥīd* and a conclusion. In his introduction, al-Banjārī explains the four major destructive qualities that prevent one from reaching knowledge of God such as laxity (*futūr*), lack of interest (*malāl*), hypocrisy (*riyā'*), dishonesty (*sum^{c}ah*), and self-satisfaction (^{c}*ujūb*). This introduction is pivotal for one to be aware about spiritual obstacles in traveling in the path to God.[27] This shows al-Banjārī's expertise in successfully educating one in undergoing the spiritual journey to God.

He then explains the categorization of *tawḥīd* into four divisions systematically: *tawḥīd al-af^{c}āl* (the unity of actions), *tawḥīd al-asmā'* (the unity of names), *tawḥīd al-ṣifāt* (the unity of attributes) and *tawḥīd al-dhāt* (the unity of Essence). The pattern of organizing topics and the divisions of *tawḥīd* is similar to the way done by ^{c}Abd al-Karīm al-Jīlī (d. 832H/1428M) in his book *al-insān al-kāmil.*[28] But al-Banjārī's explanation is different from al-Jīlī in form of expression. He tries to make his work succinct and simple and includes various short significant citations of Sufi Scholars and stresses a greater commitment to Islamic law.

In each topic of *tawḥīd*, he elaborates the teaching with a brief definition and supports the explanation with al-Qur'ān and al-Ḥadīth, and citations from various authentic Sufis literatures and clarifications from his masters' words. Besides referring to al-Ḥadīth, he also alludes to the words of companions of the Prophet and reputable Saints. It is believed he uses the words of companions and saints to strengthen his elucidation and

make it clearer. However, in citation of al-Ḥadīth, al-Banjārī does not mention the source of al-Ḥadīth, neither its narrator nor its value. It seems in his time that it is not so important to state names of the narrators because society at his period placed trust in the scholars' credibility and their teaching.

On another point, al-Banjārī does not use full translation in his work. On some occasions, he still maintains use of Arabic terminologies such as *naskhah* (transcript), *ᶜadam* (nonexistence), *fanā'* (annihilation), *baqā'* (continuance), *wujūd* (being), *ittiḥād* (union), *ḥulūl* (incarnation) etc. It is believed that these terminologies do not necessarily need to be translated since they signify important meaning in their original form. If they are translated, they may lose the actual meaning because translation sometimes does not give accurate impressions unless in Arabic terms. Most of al-Banjārī's elucidation is short and precise so that it needs more elaboration from the original text.

In explaining the difficult idea of *tawḥīd*, al-Banjārī uses symbolic expression and exemplification to make the idea understandable. In order to maintain *ahl al-sunnah wa al jamāᶜah* mainstream school of thought, al-Banjārī does a comparative study between other schools of thought in order to clarify the belief in a balanced manner. As an adherent of al-Ashᶜarī's School, al-Banjārī attempts to expand and reconcile al-Ashᶜarī's thought in Sufism. This is because almost all of al-Ashᶜarī's thought is similar to Sufism even though they apply different terminologies but have a close meaning to each other. In his conclusion, he advises that his teaching should be kept properly to its members. He supports this idea by several Quranic verses and relevant al-Ḥadīth.

Conclusion:

In nutshell, even al Banjari epistle faces many challenges and critique but it is still relevant and readable by many Malay scholars in the Malay world. It can be said that al-Banjārī's way of writing is well organized, precise and complicated in several sentences as well as terminologies. It is not suitable for all people but is more appropriate for those who seek to learn *tawḥīd* under the guidance and explanation of *shaykh murshid.* Even though, his explanation may be said to be too succinct, but it requires the additional reference and commentaries from other authentic books in theological and Sufism to understand the teaching of *tawḥīd* correctly to avoid misunderstood from its literal expression and teaching.

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